



MSHA's Accident Prevention Program Safety Idea



Highwall Miner and Auger Ignition Prevention

From 2001-2009 there have been three ignitions involving auger miners and one involving a highwall miner. Serious consequences could have resulted from each incident. To decrease the probability of having a gas or dust ignition and associated injuries mine operators need to consider adopting these source, engineering, and administrative controls.

Source Control

- Assure spacing / web control between holes is planned
- Monitor for methane and oxygen gases & have audible and visual indicators
- Inert the active hole with non-combustible gas or,
- If applicable, use adequate ventilation and water sprays



Engineering Control

- Use an adequate blast deflection shield to protect workers around the hole
- Use chemically strengthened "shatterproof" glass in worker cab areas
- Use survey/alignment control devices to assure true placement, alignment and completion of holes

Administrative Control

- Do not position persons in direct line of the hole being mined and adjacent hole
- Use diligence when aligning your equipment for the next hole to be mined
- Inert adjacent holes and cover previous holes to maintain inert atmosphere in the event of an intersection to previous hole
- Conduct a thorough search for old/abandoned gas wells
- Train all miners regarding ignitions and mitigation controls

If you have a tip you would like to pass on, you can email it to zzMSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov.

If your tip is selected, you will receive credit in this space.

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